



House Health Policy Committee

11/30/2016

HBs 6066, 6067, 6068: Oppose

The ACLU of Michigan opposes House Bills 6066-6068 because the package would institute a photo ID requirement for virtually all voters – effectively making it more difficult for the poor, elderly, communities of color, and the disabled to vote.

While there are some provisions in the bill that intend to make it somewhat easier for indigent people to obtain photo ID, those provisions are only helpful if those individuals, who are already lacking in resources, know exactly what to do and what hoops to jump through in advance.

Waiving the cost of a photo ID does not account for other significant costs that voters will have to pay, including transportation, waiting in line, or acquiring the underlying documents like a birth certificate.

Similarly, while it is technically possible for voters who forget their ID on election day to vote with a provisional ballot and then bring their ID into the clerk's office later in the week, the practical effect of these bills will be to disenfranchise the vast majority of eligible voters who don't have ID or show up on election day without it.

Finally, claims that voter ID laws are necessary to prevent voter fraud are unsubstantiated. Studies have shown, time and time again, that no credible threat of voter fraud exists. In fact, impersonation of voters on Election Day is one of the least frequent forms of voter fraud because it is the most likely type of fraud to be discovered, there are stiff penalties associated with this type of fraud, and it is an inefficient method of influencing an election.

Voting is a fundamental right. When people take the time and responsibility to exercise their right to vote, we need to guarantee that their votes are counted and their voices are heard. Voter ID laws restrict access to the voting booth.

We have fallen behind other states in ensuring our elections are secure, accurate, and modern. Michigan is one of only 5 states severely limiting the freedom of eligible citizens to register to vote and cast a ballot.¹ Voting modernization is taking place across the country, in states that are liberal, conservative, and even battleground states, but not in Michigan.

¹ Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah.

The integrity of our elections depends on every eligible citizen being able to register and cast their vote. Rather than putting hurdles in the way of eligible voters, I urge you to instead support real solutions that would make Michigan elections more secure, accurate, and modern such as online voter registration, no reason absentee voting, early voting, and same-day registration.

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